



# Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

## NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH  
PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 AUGUST 2015 #2

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# Clan Forsyth Day

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 from 2 to 5pm**  
**Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby**

This is the day to bring along your Forsyth mementos: photos, literature, artworks.... anything related to your clan and your family history.

The focus this year will again be on World War One memorabilia including medals, photos, letters to and from the front, war diaries etc.



The day also gives you a chance to meet other clan members and to have some refreshments including tea, coffee, delicious sandwiches and cakes.

Members of other clans are welcome!

RSVP to Judy Forsyth by  
20<sup>th</sup> September:  
[jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au)  
OR 9634 2749



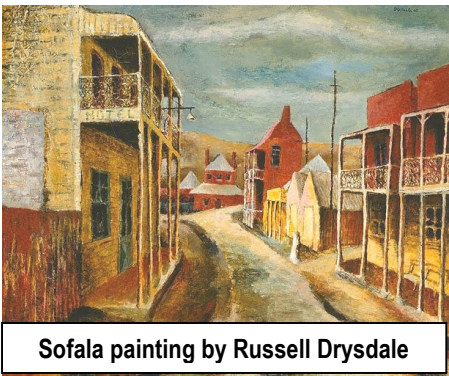
Photo of James in early 1860s

## Old Jemmy Forsyth - the best dancer in Sofala

(Sofala is an old gold-mining town on the western side of the Blue Mountains, east of Hill End and north of Bathurst).

*The information in this article has only recently come to light through the excellent research work by Tim Crossley, Clan Treasurer. Many thanks Tim.*

There have been a number of articles in this Newsletter about James Forsyth, born in Bermondsey in 1818, who came to Australia in the 1850s and subsequently arranged for his wife Margaret and their children including Thomas Todd Forsyth, Robert Forsyth, and John Forsyth to move from Bermondsey to Sydney. James was a pioneer tanner in Willoughby and set up a large leather business and tannery known as James Forsyth & Sons. One of those earlier articles was titled 'The Missing Years', which covered the time from when he left London at the end of 1848 until early 1863 when his family joined him in Sydney. We only have sketchy knowledge of his movements during that time, but an article from a 1907 newspaper recently unearthed by Tim Crossley has confirmed what had only been suspected previously, and added more detail. Family stories and information from James's obituaries noted he was in both the Victorian and NSW gold fields during the 1850s. He was at Sofala on the Turon river in the booms of the early 1850s and the early 1860s. The family stories said he 'struck it rich' at Sofala, but research had previously indicated it was unlikely he made money by finding gold, and more likely by supplying miners with equipment, in his case, probably leather goods. Enquiries to the Bathurst District Historical Society some years ago found no evidence that James made a major gold find, neither did they have any information about his activities, other than referring us to one paragraph in a book about Sofala, which described a 'Jemmy Forsyth' as being in the midst of the fun at the Globe Hotel dancing on Saturday nights. That certainly sounded like our James, but we had no direct connection. Now we do.



Sofala painting by Russell Drysdale

The article found by Tim was in a paper called 'The Newsletter – an Australian Paper for Australian people', which was published between 1900 and 1918 (prior to that it was known as The Elector from 1890 to 1900). It was published on Saturdays, and it carried the sub-title 'an up to date social, dramatic, sporting, political and general newspaper for the people'. On the 11<sup>th</sup> May 1907, an article written by Paul Twyford appeared titled 'In Remembrance of an old Turon Digger, being reminiscent of the early 1860s at Sofala'. Parts of this article are reproduced below.

The author told of his time at the Sofala diggings, and of his return to the ghost town that it had become. When he comes to discuss the old Globe Hotel, is when it becomes interesting. He remembers the step dancing<sup>1</sup> held every Saturday night, and in particular, he talks about Mrs Mary Giles, who was married to the publican at the Globe Hotel. Both this author and writers in other sources, describe her as a 'little woman, as pretty a step dancer that ever lifted a skirt, and 'like most little women, lively in the extreme.' (Step dancing is the generic term for dancing where footwork is the predominant aspect eg tap dancing). One of them goes on to say that, 'If the fun was not so fast and furious as it might be, our hostess would take the floor and challenge the step dancers of the male persuasion to 'come on and shake a leg'. This was generally responded to by 'Little Jemmy' Forsyth, 'lively' Jack Shannassy, Jeremy Meehan and some others; and believe me, the pace was very warm – very'. The best of the male dancers was Jemmy Forsyth. Twyford remembers him thus. 'There's the long room and they are hard at it. Mrs. Giles - and she could dance, couldn't she- and the little man in the red shirt. You remember him surely — is he yet among the quick?'

'Let me describe him in detail, for his is the raison d' etre of this circumlocutory yarn. He is a short, spare, wiry man with a prematurely aged face, which is fringed with a light brown whisker meeting on the chin; upper lip shaved and this gives undue prominence to a nose of the aquiline type. His costume is up-to-date (of that period) embracing a red shirt, trouser with the yellow dirt of the Paterson's Point claim still upon them: a black silk neckerchief hangs loosely about his neck sailor fashion, the collar of the shirt being unbuttoned. His head is long and narrow thatched with straight light brown Hair. He is a neat, shapely little man and his feet encased in a pair of John Hunter's (who then had opened a shop in Bathurst) guinea line patent-leather - the only bit of finery about him.'

'There were many good step dancers in Sofala in those days, but they were heavy dancers, if not heavy now; but none

came up to this man in the red shirt now dancing step to step with Mrs Giles, and she an old woman with three or four tall daughters. But the old lady is active as a marmoset and as full of antics. She enjoys a good step, and there is no partner equal to Old Jemmy Forsyth, and when these two take the floor everything else goes by the board. The seats all-round the room are full and the windows and door-ways are blocked. Tom Kelly and Fiddler Gallagher play with might and main, and the onlookers cheer until the dancers cry 'go' by mutual consent in order to let the younger dancers polka, waltz, or schattische. And, nowise exhausted, Jemmy would join the others, for he was just as good a waltzer as step-dancer, and if women and girls were scarce Jemmy would take the floor as a lady. He was so light, and the young men who were novices were only too pleased to secure him, for being strong as well as light he could move them as he pleased. This was the usual thing on Saturday nights, along in '61 and '62 — Sofala's brightest days. The author goes on to describe the economic situation at Sofala, one of two boom times for the town. He also notes that Jemmy was not that well off financially. There had, of course, been an earlier period of prosperity — the early days of the rush — 1851: but, then, Sofala was an upturned lead, and the town only canvas and calico, its main street winding in and out among the several camps. But in the sixties things had settled down. There was a town, schools and churches, hotels, assembly rooms, comfortable homes, and everybody was doing well. Yes, and probably the yield of gold was greater than in '51, though it is impossible to say how much was won then, for no record was kept from 1851 to 1859. However, things hummed in old Sofala during the first three years of the decade ending 1870; and then came Gulgong with its rich, deep leads. In these boom times when Jemmy Forsyth's patent-leathers so lightly kissed the well-polished floors of Sofala dancing saloons in measured rhythm, work was plentiful and the wages fairly good.

'Yet in all this excitement and gold-winning, the little nimble foot man in the red shirt worked for wages or at any rate, in some not very profitable claim, and the extent of his wealth was limited to a few coins as would jingle on a tombstone. Sofala boomed, but Jemmy Forsyth somehow failed to gather moss.'

'We had suspected that the dancer might have been our James, but were not really sure.' The author goes on to make the connection for us. This article was written in the year James died, 1907.

But a change came, and Sofala went down and the man in the red shirt went up, but it was not at the gold diggings. All at once he was missing, and his old mate and I believe co-partner in Sofala Reach; and he being communicative, let out that Jemmy had gone to Sydney to tackle his trade — that of a tanner. Then it came out that he was an exceptionally clever workman, had a trade secret, and was the only man in the colony that could make the finer French leathers. In Bermondsey, James had trained in Morocco leather tanning like his father before him. This is a very fine leather usually made from goatskin.

And yet another surprise — that he was a married man and that his wife and children were coming out to him from the old country. It was almost a shock to many of us to learn all this, for Jemmy the dancer had been a "bit of a lad" among us and quite a gay boy as well. True, he and Bob Johnson were mates, and Bob was "Methody" as all knew, and his one great sorrow was that Jemmy would not go to the Wesleyan Chapel in the back street. Now, we all gave the Chapel a turn just as we did the other places of worship; but then it was only when Dick Painter, Jemmy Bennett, and a few other good singers were going to give us a taste of their vocalism that we were so good. And Dick's fine bass voice was worth hearing — it shook the building from floor to ridge pole. Still, even that failed to draw Jemmy to meeting, and poor Bob was sore of heart in consequence. This is a surprise because family legend says James was converted to the Wesleyan faith on the gold fields, and we know he became a pillar of the church and funded a number of churches on the North Shore and a Wesleyan Temperance Hall in Penshurst Street Willoughby. Clearly something changed his mind after he left Sofala. The author goes on to note James's passing.

'Yet there died at Willoughby the other day James Forsyth, a pillar of the Methodist Church, a man of great wealth and age, who had lived an honoured life for over forty years in that locality and had built up one of the largest tannery businesses in the metropolis. The newspapers just mentioned, by the way that in the early fifties he was gold digging on the Turon and Ballarat and left the last named place for Willoughby, where he commenced business, which is not quite right, in that he (and of course this James Forsyth was our Jemmy of the red shirt and nimble foot) left the Turon and went straight to Sydney. His Ballarat experiences must have been earlier.

'I remember Jemmy Forsyth's shop in George-street West — a few doors from Harris-street — for many years. At the same time the big tannery at Willoughby was growing bigger and bigger, until the retail shop was abandoned. Strange that in all those years I never saw Jemmy in his altered condition, though I did see his old mate Bob Johnson.'

The article continued in the next edition of The Newsletter. It described in more detail some of the miners and characters, but the second instalment ended with a few more remarks about our James.

'And now having concluded my reminiscent ramble, I fancy I see a leery old phiz, with a Mephistophelian nose, grinning over my shoulder — clad not in the habit of go to meeting responsibility either but clad in the old red shirt and yellow clay stained trousers — it is so hard for me to imagine old Jemmy in orthodox black cloth and a bell topper — and the shrewd old face beams indulgently, while his lips move as if saying 'There's nothing like leather, lad'

Hide or leather, alls one — and so are Jemmy the champion dancer of Sofala in the early sixties, and the wealthy

Willoughby tanner who died the other day in good odour with his church and society; and this scribe has but one wish – that he may rest in peace, no matter how much or how little marble they pile on top of him.’

So we now have confirmation, from an eye witness no less, that our James was the great step dancer at Sofala. What this information does change for us is some of the timing in James’s missing years, and blows away a few family myths. It seems that he left Sofala for Sydney in 1862, after he had applied for Margaret and the children to come to Australia. The article also indicates he was not at all well off financially while at Sofala, and makes no mention of him making money from either gold or supplies, indicating he was not as well placed financially as family stories told. It also now seems that his working times with the large tanning firms of Alderson & Sons and Vickers were after Margaret and the family arrived. It seems his original trade in Moroccan leather, which required fine tradesman’s skills, was of great value, and perhaps commanded a premium wage.

Some of the anecdotes in the article resonate with James’s background; ‘the patent leather boots being the only the only bit of finery about him’ (he would have known his leathers), and ‘the neckerchief being worn sailor fashion’ (James also worked as a sailor- perhaps that is where he learnt to dance).

Whatever else happened after the family settled in Sydney, James and his sons built a solid leather business which grew and prospered for over 30 years. James’s wandering life had enabled he and his family to escape the poverty which enveloped working class people in London.

This latest information confirms that James, as had long been suspected, had a wonderful time tripping around, (and also the light fantastic), until his family arrived in 1863. It is a mark of his character that after 15 years apart he still brought them out from England to join him, and mended his wandering, and dancing habits. The only photo we have of him from about this time is the one above, taken we think soon after the family arrived. Besides the (probably borrowed) ill-fitting suit coat, he meets the physical description given by the author.

## Robert Archibald Forsyth

*(Known by his family nickname of “Roy”)*

### Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour

**Employment:** Farmer & Grazier, **School:** Sydney Grammar School

**Previous Military History:** Coronation Cadet (selected by the school to attend the Coronation of His Majesty, King George V).

**Historical Reference:** Colonel R. Murphy of Under Sheriff, NSW. **Number:** 2367,

**Rank:** Lance Sergeant. **Unit:** 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Infantry.

**Service:** Army, **Conflict:** 1914 to 1918, World War 1, **Date of Death:**

6<sup>th</sup> May, 1918, **Age at Death:** 26, **Place of Death:** Hangard Wood, Villers Brettoneaux, **Cause of Death:** Died of Wounds – of pneumonia at 6<sup>th</sup> General Hospital. Certified by A.I.F. Headquarters on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1918.

**Memorial Panel:** 85, **Cemetery or Memorial Details:** France 17 Boisguillaume Communal Cemetery Extension, **Next of Kin:** Robert James (father) and Agnes Christina Forsyth (mother) of “Maybrook” Narromine, NSW. **Place of Enlistment:** Narromine NSW, **Native Place:** Sydney

**FORSYTH**, Lce. Serjt Robert Archibald. 2367 MM (military Medal) 18<sup>th</sup> Bn. Australian Infantry. Died of wounds, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1918. Age 26. Son of Robert James and Agnes Forsyth of “Maybrook” Narromine, NSW. Native of Sydney, NSW. D 17B. Other Health History: Admitted to British Red Cross Hospital on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1916. Discharged sick furlough on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Transferred to 3<sup>rd</sup> Western General Hospital, Certified by Headquarters on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Re, Sgt. R. A Forsyth of 18<sup>th</sup> Batt. AIF was admitted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1918 from No. 41 Casualty Clearing Station, suffering from G.S.W. left thigh (compound fracture of left femur). His progress was quite satisfactory until 6<sup>th</sup> May 1918 when he suddenly collapsed and died at 7.45pm. He was buried in Boisgillaume Cemetery near Rouen on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1918 in grave No. 17B. (a letter from O.C. No. 8 General Hospital, France. 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1918). **Source:** Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army.



### More Background Information

**FORSYTH**, Lance Sergeant Robert Archibald...known by the nickname of Roy. No. 2367 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements. Military Medal. Resided in the “The Towers” in Sharp Street in Belmore, Sydney and at “Maybrook” at Narromine NSW. He was a farmer and grazier. Born in Newtown, Sydney in 1892, the son of Robert James and Agnes Forsyth. Educated at Moorfields School, then at Sydney Grammar School. He

joined the Coronation Cadets at 17 and was selected by his school to attend the Coronation at Westminster Abbey of His Majesty, King George V.

Roy lived at "The Towers\*" in Belmore. Surrounding streets were named after him: Robert, Archibald, Forsyth and Roy). He was the nephew of Archibald Forsyth, founder of the Australian Rope Works. Archibald Forsyth was a leading Sydney businessman and philanthropist. Roy embarked for Europe on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1915 and arrived in France on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1916. He was wounded at Pozieres on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1916. He was promoted to Lance Sergeant on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1917. Wounded again south of Riencourt on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1917 and was taken to England. He returned to France on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1918

### **Military Medal Citation**

During an attack on a heavily armed enemy strong post north of Hangard at 3.20am on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1918, the Platoon Officer and Sergeant were wounded. This NCO (R.A. Forsyth) then took charge of the platoon and gallantly led it to ten yards of the enemy position under heavy, grazing from several machine guns. He hung on until 22 out of his 30 men were casualties, and he himself was wounded. When a corporal and a private went to his rescue he tried in vain to get them to leave him and get back themselves to safety. Stretcher bearers brought him in later. Subsequently he died on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1918. There is a monument to R. A (Roy) Forsyth at South Belmore Public School and a Memorial at Randwick Cemetery in the Presbyterian Section.

*Roy sent letters home from the front to his family. These letters have been collected and re-typed into a book. Excerpts from these letters will be published in future editions of the Clan Forsyth newsletter and on the clan website. The Towers is now part of a Greek Orthodox school in Belmore.*



### **Denise's Column** *(Denise Park is a member of the Clan Committee)*

Buying some junket tablets, brought to mind the old fashioned cooking from my childhood.

We always had desert to complete a meal. This was often stretched by extra bread and butter with jam and honey to enjoy with the tea cosy encased teapot. At some stage it was decided that I should learn to cook.

Off to cooking classes to learn how to make the basic dishes of that time. No electric gadgets, although we did have a temperamental gas oven and burners that popped and emitted a strong smell of gas. Blunt knives, wooden chopping board and rolling pin, a gill measuring cup and fork to whip up meringues. Making whipped cream and meringues with a fork built our biceps!

There was always a shortage of bowls which led to our learning improvisation and much aggression to secure whatever we needed to plate up and create our assignment.

Chocolate blancmange floating in a sea of tomato soup was one fellow student's solution to this problem. When we ran out of cocoa for chocolate icing, one enterprising girl used Vegemite to ice her chocolate cake; she was saved by the fact that the teacher judged our efforts on appearance not on taste!

I quickly discovered that my talents lay in presentation and as I had a very capable cooking partner, I would busy myself with the washing up and preparing the table and garnishes.

The food we prepared was from the Commonsense Cook Book and very basic by today's standards. Once a year we had to excel ourselves to create something special for the school exhibition. Exotic decorated Birthday, Xmas and Wedding cakes had to be created, again with our forks making fondant and royal icing to mould and pipe into fanciful creations. How much I appreciate all my many mod cons and kitchen gee gaws and how much easier to do exotic deserts and cakes now.

It is a pity I am too lazy now to start!!

## **COMING EVENTS OF INTEREST:**

**19<sup>TH</sup> Annual Gathering of the Clans** on the Central Coast NSW. Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September. 10am to 4.30pm on Norah Head Sports Oval, Bungary Road, Norah Head. Details: [www.gatheringoftheclans.weebly.com](http://www.gatheringoftheclans.weebly.com)

**Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo** at Docklands in Melbourne, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2016. See Ticketmaster for details and bookings.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Thank you to the members, who attended the AGM in March. Although our numbers were down, a good time was had by all. The Club had us so positioned that we were out of the mainstream area, which made us comfortable for the meeting. The election of Office Bearers was again, a very speedy procedure. Congratulations to all who were elected. But, we still need a Secretary – can you help?

As I sit to write this report, my mind travels back to recently when Tim, our Web Master, was contacted by a lady whose ancestor was Euphemia Forsythe. The family story which came with the query was sad but beautiful in the memory of her family. It also told of a very practical invention by one of her descendants.

In my own situation a few days ago, I attended the funeral of my sister-in-law, Moira, in Melbourne. The eulogies at the service were great, to put it mildly, because the family had the time to sit and listen to her about her interesting life. So much better to talk with our loved ones, in life, rather than hear bits and pieces at a service, or worse having to scratch around for some information at the time of death. Driving back from Melbourne, my daughters and I talked, I'd mentioned little things, which were quite insignificant and a few times the comment was made "I didn't know that".

It would be a terrific thing to write your own life story – you may not think you are a very interesting person – you don't have to be a High Court Judge, a Police Commissioner or a Prime Minister. There will be something in your life, which will spark an interest in another person. We come now to the people who have gone before us. If their life has not been documented, then now is the time to put pen to paper. The next generation, will most likely not know as much as you or your generation know. Life stories can be submitted to your Clan Society for safe keeping, and those who have passed on maybe able to be put onto our web site with other photographs and information, where we all can enjoy the story of another Forsyth and what happened in their lifetime.

We can help with your research. The Clan have a subscription to "Ancestry.com" – both Australia & United Kingdom and I have access to "Find my Past" covering the same areas. There are many Internet sites which are very helpful and free. I recommend the "Trove" web site. An Australian National Library project, which has digitized hundreds of city and country Australian newspapers and can be "searched" by your ancestor's name. Many death notices and obituaries are included and the wonderful reports of the weddings, down to the materials & colours the bride, bridesmaids and mothers wore. The information depends on the submission to the papers or the reporters gathering the facts. Well worth a look, even if researching an area or event. If you started your family history years ago and it all became too hard, then let us help you if at all possible. If you haven't started then now is the time – help is available. Please contact me or our Web Master, Tim.

Judy Forsyth ([jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au)) or (02) 9634 2749.



**WILLIAM HENRY FORSYTH** - Son of Thomas Forsyth & Maria Ann Smith  
 Born: 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 1886 at Parramatta. Died: 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915 at Battle of Lone Pine, Gallipoli. Married: 28<sup>th</sup> January 1905 at Parramatta.

William enlisted in the Army on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1914 at Liverpool & embarked at Sydney on HMAT A48 "Seang Bee" on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1915. He was Private #1356 in the 4<sup>th</sup> Btn, Australian Infantry (AIF). He was aged 28 years & 10 months at the time of enlistment. He was 5' 6", weighed 10 stone 9 pounds with brown hair & eyes, with a medium complexion. He was Church of England.

William died aged 29 years on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915. He was killed in action in the Lone Pine Battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula. In statements from his fellow soldiers, who landed at Gallipoli on 25<sup>th</sup> April with William, they stated that William was found in the trenches at Lone Pine after the charge. He was seen going into the charge about 6pm on the 7<sup>th</sup> August. He got as far as the first line of enemy trenches before being killed. It was found by Court of Enquiry that William was killed in action. His remains were never identified. His name is located on Panel 40 in the Commemorative area of the Australian War Memorial at Lone Pine Cemetery. His name is

inscribed - "Forsyth W." Medals received were: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal. There was only one child from his marriage to Ursula James. The child's name was Netta Forsyth.



When the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, was addressing the crowd at the Lone Pine cemetery, Gallipoli on Anzac Day, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2015, on the memorial wall behind him was the name "Forsyth W."

**KENNETH MACQUARIE FORSYTH** – Son of George James Forsyth & Charlotte Richards

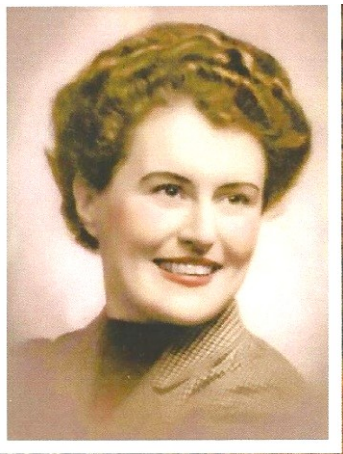
Born: June 1891 at Granville. Died: 16<sup>th</sup> October 1917 at Polygon Wood, Belgium, Europe (died from his wounds) Buried: at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium, Europe. Kenneth was the son of George & Charlotte who lived at 88 Avenue Rd, Mosman. He was a native of Harris Park who enlisted at Redfern. At the time of enlistment he was a railway guard for the Broken Hill Propriety in Port Pirie SA. Also known as Harry, Kenneth, a red headed, short, stout soldier, with the rank of Private served in the 57<sup>th</sup> Battalion Australian Infantry in the 1914-1918. His number was 3014. He died of his wounds, received as a result of suffering severe multiple shell wounds to his head, legs & body. He was admitted in a critical condition to No.17 CC Station where he passed away at 8am. Private J Boyce, a friend of Kenneth's, recalled that they were going into a reserve near Ypres, when Kenneth was wounded by a shell & taken away. Kenneth, always seeming positive, had told his mate that he would be alright, which was definitely not the case. He also told his friend that he had 3 brothers in the army & that 2 of them had been killed. Kenneth is remembered with honour at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Belgium, Plot XXI, Row H, Grave 9. Kenneth's name is also located at panel 163 in the Commemorative area of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

**BRUCE ALLAN HOLBERT FORSYTH** - son of George James Forsyth & Charlotte Jane Richards Born: March 1888 at Granville, NSW Died: 1923 at Randwick, NSW Bruce was 28 years & 8 months of age, working as a brass finisher when he enlisted on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1916, with Service number 2840. He was described as being 5'3.5", weighing 132 pounds, with a medium complexion, grey eyes and brown hair. He had a scar on the bridge of his nose, as well as another scar on the outside of his right knee. He had previously served in the CMF for 3 weeks, before being transferred to the AIF. Bruce embarked from Sydney, as part of 33<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, aboard HMAT "Beltana" on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1916, but after falling ill with pneumonia, disembarked at Fremantle on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1916, to be hospitalised. He re-embarked at Fremantle aboard A30 "Borda" on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1917. He reached Plymouth on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1917 as part of the 20/28<sup>th</sup> Battalion. After a letter sent to the AIF by Bruce's younger brother, Colin, he returned to Australia, for family reasons, aboard HT "Llanstephen Castle" on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1918. Colin pleaded with the AIF to send his oldest brother, Bruce home, as their mother, Charlotte was left at home with 4 other younger children, of school age, with no husband. One of her sons, had already been killed and her other 3 sons were serving overseas. Charlotte was living in poverty, as she had been dependent on her older son's income. A very sad situation, which many other families of this time would have had to endure. Bruce did not see action in Europe, he was attached to the 7<sup>th</sup>, then 6<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion unit in the UK, before returning to Australia on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1918. He was discharged on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1918, medically unfit, but with no disability stated.

**STUART MACQUARY FORSYTH** - son of George James Forsyth & Charlotte Jane Richards Born: 15<sup>th</sup> August 1895 at Mosman Died: 26<sup>th</sup> April 1976 at Mackay, Qld Stuart was a 20 year old farm hand, living at 148 Military Road, Mosman, when he enlisted on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1915, with Service Number 1091. He was described as 5'5", with a dark complexion, grey eyes and brown hair. He embarked aboard HT "Madras" on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1915 as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, bound for Egypt. After serving at Gallipoli Peninsula & Egypt, Trooper Forsyth was sent to Dardanelles in November 1916. Trooper Stuart Forsyth returned to Australia on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1919, after peace was declared.

**COLIN BATHURST FORSYTH** - son of George James Forsyth & Charlotte Jane Richards. Born: 1896 at Mosman Died: 5<sup>th</sup> November 1957 at RGH Concord, NSW Colin, a brass finisher, enlisted on 30 September 1915, at the age 19 years, with Service Number 1877. He was described as 5'3" tall, 123 pounds with a dark complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. He became a gunner in the 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Cyclist Battalion, before moving to 2<sup>nd</sup> Cyclist Battalion. He served in France. He received a congratulatory note when he stopped 2 runaway horses which were attached to a wagon that lost one of its wheels. He managed to halt the horses before anyone was injured. Colin returned to Australia aboard "Borda" on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1919.

*These soldiers were – all related to Thomas & Maria Forsyth (Parramatta Park fame)*



**SAD PASSING: MOIRA JEANETTE ESLER. 22.10.1921 – 30.5.2015**

Moira Jeanette Esler was born October 22, 1921. Her father James Davidson Forsyth, her mother was Sylvia Myrtle Olive (Wood) Forsyth. Her younger brother, also James Davidson Forsyth, was born eight years later.

In the great depression Moira's father lost his job. He could have gone to work on the railways interstate, but as Moira's younger brother, Jim was only one year old, their Dad did not want to leave the family alone. He leased their house to a school teacher and the family moved down to live on the beach along with thousands of other people. Moira, Jim and their mother, slept in the car at night whilst their Dad slept on a stretcher beside the car. Moira was only 9 years old, but she remembered so many people coughing all night. Probably from T.B. In due course Moira's father noticed a small vacant shop nearby, so they rented one room to live in. The father used his rental money from the family home and

food coupons to open a small shop to sell food and other goods to the beach dwellers, who were known as Sand Gropers. For many years as she grew up, Moira moved from one Milk Bar to the next, and became adept at doing her homework whilst serving the customers. Fortunately, the business of buying, renovating and selling these small businesses proved successful and Moira later attended MLC while Jim went to Scotch College. Moira enjoyed learning and gained her Matriculation, and continued to study a wide array of subjects all her life, especially languages. She learned Russian, Indonesian, and smattering of several others, and she enjoyed visiting the countries and trying out her linguistic skills.

Moira met her future husband Alan Esler at a church dance in the late 1930's as Australia was about to become embroiled in the Second World War. They both joined the Armed Forces, with Alan initially in the Army and then the Air Force, while Moira joined the WRAAF and later became a Section Officer. She became a skilled Morse operator and was on duty on the day that Darwin was first bombed. She was involved in relaying messages to and from Darwin but was not allowed to tell anyone about it for some time. Thirty years later, when Stuart was learning Morse for an amateur radio licence at a speed of 10 words per minute, Mum was still able to send and receive Morse at about double that speed.

In August 1943, Moira and Alan were married. With wartime austerity, there were no lavish wedding ceremonies in those days! Wedding photos while wearing uniform were the norm. They did not have much time together before Alan had to return to his squadron in the North of Australia. After the war ended, Moira & Alan settled into a dairy farm in the Gippsland area of Victoria with their three children, Stuart, Adrienne & Andrew.

When the Korean War began, Alan was called back to RAAF as a Navigation Instructor, and continued in RAAF at Sale Victoria, Amberley Queensland, Inala Queensland, Point Cook, Victoria, and Rathmines NSW. After Rathmines, the family moved back to Melbourne. With the children now a bit older, Moira decided to become a primary school teacher and entered Toorak Teachers College. After graduating her early appointment was a teaching job in Syndal Primary School, with her son Andrew as her student. Alan was then transferred to Fairburn, Canberra. As the wife of the Senior Officer, residing on the base, Moira had traditional duties to perform amongst, and with the other Air Force wives. After Alan's Retirement as Wing Commander they purchased another farm at Glenfyne Victoria where Alan died in 1978. Moira travelled a lot, and in her later years on one of her cruises she met Eric Jewell, the second great man in her life. They travelled together for many years, enjoying each other's company both on sea and land.

*A condensed version from the family of Moira Jeanette Esler.*

**SAD PASSING:** Neville Henry Edmunds, on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 age 94. Husband of Jessica. Lived at Merrylands NSW.

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There is at the moment one 2014-15 subscription which remains unidentified. We don't know who made the payment via BPay on 27.10.2014 so please contact us. We remind members to note their name on any transactions. Thanks.

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[clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com](mailto:clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com)

Also post or email your articles, photos and anecdotes for inclusion in future Clan Newsletters.

Another option for contributions: the Newsletter Editor's email address: [cwlee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cwlee@optusnet.com.au)

**We are also looking for someone to become Clan Secretary.**

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